

Name: Tempura Batter (Rohanne Udall and Paul Hughes)

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Your availability between 29 March – 2 April 2017:

Available for the entirety

1. Summarise your EXPERIMENTICA proposal in 100 words:

Meaningless Dance 13 (Empty Gestures) is a duet of growing length, composed of meaningful hand gestures ripped from the internet. An accumulating series of data held within two bodies, the chain of moments extends with each performance. Hovering within the meaning/lessness of these cited gestures, the work exposes the very real labour of delivery; questioning what a sincere gesture might be from performer to audience. It has been described as 'a bold work, apparently simple, yet complex in its thinking and deceptively demanding in its execution' (Efrosini Protopapa (practicing artist and Senior Lecturer in Dance at University of Roehampton)).

2. Describe your artistic practice: (300 words max)

Tempura Batter is the collaborative practice of Rohanne Udall and Paul Hughes. Our work takes place across choreographic, performance and visual arts contexts. Drawing from a playful and critical approach to the stage, we consider meaning and meaninglessness through oblique gestures. Our work is born out of, and speaks to, a culture that is saturated in content, and subject to endless streams of information, reference and possibility; we are attracted to processes of fidgeting, filtering, emulation and disruption

Our writing projects host collisions and confusions between participants and unfold out towards the reader through instruction and suggestion. These uncertain encounters take place on the stage through a viewer/performer relationship that moves between empathy, nervousness and distance. By manipulating the distance between internal sensation and a viewing audience, we unsettle and engross both a fleeting spectator and a sustained encounter.

Recent work includes *Empty Gestures* (Rich Mix; Attenborough Arts Centre; 2016) and *Partner Dances For One* (Camden People's Theatre; Battersea Arts Centre; I'Klectik Art

Lab; 2015-16); an exhibition of performance Floorplan//Here Or Now (Rich Mix; 2015); and collaborative writing projects Imaginary Festivals Project (Forest Fringe; 2014) and Digital Writing Group (International Conference on Artistic Research; 2016).

Rohanne and Paul met while at the University of Edinburgh, where he studied MA Philosophy and she a Fine Art MA (Hons) with Edinburgh College of Art. Paul studies MA Dance Studies, University of Roehampton. With Ponyboy Curtis he has presented work at The Yard Theatre (FCKSYSTEMS, 2016; At The Yard, 2015) and has worked with Battersea Arts Centre and Artsadmin as an emerging artist. Rohanne undertook a residency at Hospitalfield, Arbroath, funded by an ECA bequest for Distinguished Work, Hope Scott Trust and Glasgow City Council. We are working with Vlatka Horvat on her new commission for HAU, Berlin, premiering in 2017.

3. Title of Project: Meaningless Dance 13 (Empty Gestures)

4. Describe your EXPERIMENTICA proposal: (500 words max)

We propose to present our choreographic work for the stage, *Meaningless Dance 13 (Empty Gestures)* at *EXPERIMENTICA*.

Two dancers move through a series of signs and gestures borrowed from multiple 'everyday' sources (such as sign language, codified religious movements, or casual unconscious motion in conversation), performed as an act of citation and virtuosic memory. Performed to the precise beat of a metronome, the simplicity of the movements amplifies the hesitations and minor differences between the dancers; the deceptively simple premise produces a quietly poetic and intimate encounter. The work operates within a space of intensely material presence of the (sometimes struggling) performer, whilst produced entirely from functional, meaningful content.

Whilst recognizable and rehearsed the gestures are ambiguous and decontextualized - the only certainty being the intense commitment of the performers to learn and reproduce them. In this way, the work is concerned not only with the gestures themselves, devoid of their original meaning, but also the labour of the performer. We aim to interrogate the relationship between performer and spectator - what can each offer the other; and what kind of commitment, to communication, interpretation or understanding, is demanded or expected from either side?

With clear relation to the theme of 'secret languages', we would be very excited to present this work at *EXPERIMENTICA*, and begin to form a relationship with the festival. The piece seems to indifferently catalogue diverse languages of gestures - some of which are highly 'legible' to the audience (the swear words always get a laugh), and some more historically or socially obscure. The unadorned representation of these languages flattens out their meaning, suggesting an inadequate and naive archive - it questions how language can be grasped and represented, abstracted from its environment, and how the materiality of these gestures might be reused to produce new meaning.

We are confident in the development of the work with well-received work-in-progress showings in Spring and Summer 2016 at the University of Roehampton, London; the Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester; and Rich Mix, London. With further development time over Winter 2016, we think *EXPERIMENTICA* would be a perfect context to share a longer stand-alone work. With an interdisciplinary performance practice predominantly informed

through visual arts discourse, we believe the audiences of the festival will be responsive to the work; after a couple of years of showing our work in diverse contexts, this would give us a chance to share our work on a bigger platform with a work we feel confident in.

We feel our experimental approach towards the production of contemporary performance is driven by practical and conceptual questions: we are excited by *EXPERIMENTA*'s explicit call for "artists who want to participate in discussions around their practice in a supportive and social environment, who want to share ideas, expand understandings". Having presented at conferences (Yes Conference, Institute for Applied Studies, Giessen; International Conference on Artistic Research, The Hague) and symposia (Positioning, University of Roehampton, London) we are particularly excited to work in contexts that support and encourage articulate discourse within and around artistic practice.

5. What are the presentation/production requirements for your work (200 words) (eg, Black box theatre, raked seating, no seating, technical equipment required...)

This work is designed for a black box theatre with a seated audience. Lighting: General wash. No sound or AV requirements. The work runs for 30 minutes. We would be happy to discuss performing the work multiple times.

6. Number of performers and/or technical assistants:

2 performers only

7. Please provide an outline of your budget, how much you are applying to Experimentica for? (this should be no more than £1,000.00 including your artist fee)

Artist Fees

Rehearsal period (30 hours @ £10 an hour): £300 per artist

Performance Fee / Expenses for the festival week: £200 per artist

Total: £1000